



State of Utah

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# UDOT Wants Motorists to Heed Winter Weather Preparedness Week

**SALT LAKE CITY** – In response to Governor Huntsman’s declaration on Winter Weather Preparedness Week, the Utah Department of Transportation advises motorists to remember to adjust driving behaviors during winter weather.

“When the first snowstorms hit the valley, we typically see a high number of crashes, because people just aren’t used to adjusting their driving behaviors for winter conditions,” said Robert Hull, director of traffic and safety for UDOT. “Snow, sleet and ice on the road require drivers to be more diligent, attentive and cautious. Winter weather conditions can turn small mistakes into serious problems.”

The safety and mobility of motorists during the winter months is a primary concern at UDOT. However, UDOT snowplow drivers frequently talk about the risky driving behavior they see while they’re out plowing Utah’s roadways.

The following tips will help motorists stay safe on the roads this winter:

- Never attempt to pass a snowplow. Let them go ahead of you while they clear the road for you and other motorists
- Don’t get between snowplows when they’re plowing in tandem
- Stay at least 200 feet behind a snowplow
- Slow down and be courteous
- Remove snow and ice from all of your windows before you get on the road
- Increase your following distance behind other vehicles
- Minimize lane changes
- Check [commuterlink.utah.gov](http://commuterlink.utah.gov) to see road conditions via real-time traffic cameras
- Call 511 to hear about road conditions on your route

### DID YOU KNOW?

- UDOT has pop-up sprinklers along Knudsen’s Corner, which is prone to icy conditions. These devices have built-in sensors that spray the road with an ice inhibitor when the roadway gets to a certain condition. This treatment makes the road safer by preventing ice from forming.
- UDOT actively monitors minute-to-minute weather conditions via weather stations along highways across the state. These weather stations measure valuable information such as pavement temperature, precipitation (differentiating between snow and rain), wind speed and air temperature. This information is then relayed to the Traffic Operations Center and to snow plow drivers, so the right resources can be directed to the most critical areas.

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- UDOT uses state-of-the-art snowplows equipped with video cameras mounted on the side of the truck. A small video monitor inside the cab helps the driver be more aware of approaching vehicles, the plow angle and his surroundings.
- UDOT crews start the snow removal process before the snow even falls. Crews spray salt brine on the roads before a snowstorm hits. If forecasters predict a snowstorm will hit the valley within 24 hours, UDOT crews pre-treat the road with this watery solution. While many people think that spraying a watery solution on the roads will make them icy or slick, the salt brine actually lowers the freezing point of the roads, making the snow less likely to stick to the roads.

Potential story ideas for media:

- See the pop-up sprinklers we have installed on certain roadways.
- See how we are switching our trucks from hauling asphalt to plowing snow.
- See the weather stations and learn how they detect where we send snowplows
- Drive a snow plow and see how complicated they are to operate
- See the how the salt brine is made and learn how spraying a watery solution on the roads actually makes the roads less slick.

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